

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 052 316

VT 012 255

TITLE Women Private Household Workers Fact Sheet.
INSTITUTION Women's Bureau (DOL), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE May 70
NOTE 6p.
AVAILABLE FROM Women's Bureau, Wage and Labor Standards
Administration, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Washington,
D.C. (no charge)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Domestics, *Educationally Disadvantaged, Individual
Characteristics, *Insurance Programs, Labor Laws,
Low Income, *Socioeconomic Status, *Working Women

ABSTRACT This pamphlet summarizes the present status of
domestics in the United States. Statistical data on the problems of
low income, lack of education, and poor coverage under labor laws are
presented. (BH)

ED052316



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WAGE AND LABOR STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION
WOMEN'S BUREAU
Washington, D.C. 20210

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WOMEN PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD WORKERS
FACT SHEET*

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In 1969 about 1.6 million women were employed as private household workers--including babysitters. Women constituted 98 percent of all workers in private household employment.

Annual wages in this occupation are very low:

In 1968 the median wage of even those women 14 years of age and over who were year-round full-time private household workers, including babysitters, was \$1,523.1/

The total cash income--which included wage and self-employment income as well as all forms of social insurance and public assistance payments--of almost all women in this field of employment in 1968 was still very low:

82 percent had total cash incomes under \$2,000, and
57 percent, under \$1,000.

Median total cash income of the women who were year-round full-time workers--about one-fifth the total--was \$1,701.

Almost three-fifths of the women heads of families who reported private household work as the job held longest during 1968 had incomes below the poverty level.^{2/}

* The data in this fact sheet refer to women 16 years of age and over unless otherwise indicated.

^{1/} Median means half above, half below; year round, 50 to 52 weeks; and full time, 35 hours or more a week.

^{2/} The poverty level is based on the Social Security Administration's poverty thresholds, adjusted annually in accordance with changes in the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index. Currently classified as poor are those nonfarm households where total money income is less than \$1,748 for an unrelated individual, \$2,262 for a couple, and \$3,553 for a family of four.

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The low annual wages of almost all women private household workers reflect the intermittent character of their employment as well as their low rates of pay when employed:

Part time/full time

In 1969, 64 percent of the women private household workers worked part time (less than 35 hours a week).

Of the full-time workers, 64 percent worked between 35 and 40 hours a week. The remaining 36 percent worked longer hours.

Part year/full year

Of women private household workers in 1968:

4 out of 10 worked 26 weeks or less;

2 out of 10 worked between 27 and 49 weeks; and

About 4 out of 10 worked 50 to 52 weeks.

Many women private household workers are heads of families:

Nearly 200,000 women in this occupation were heads of families in March 1969.

In 1960, two-thirds of the families headed by either men or women private household workers included children under 18 years of age. About one-fourth of the families with children under 18 had at least four children in the family.

Of the 1.4 million women 14 years of age and over who reported their occupations as dayworkers, housekeepers, maids, and laundresses, but excluding babysitters, in 1960:

More lived in the South than elsewhere:

About 54 percent were in the South;

Over 19 percent were in the Northeastern States;

About 18 percent were in the North Central States; and

More than 9 percent were in the West.

Negroes predominated:

Some 64 percent were Negro;

About 35 percent were white; and

Almost 1 percent were other nonwhites.

Relatively few were "live-in" workers:

About 11 percent "lived in."

This was an urban occupation:

About 74 percent were in urban areas;

Some 21 percent were in rural nonfarm areas; and

About 5 percent were in rural farm areas.

The average private household worker was about 6 years older than the typical woman in the labor force:

The median age of all employed private household workers was 46 years.

53 percent were 45 years and over;

29 percent were over 55; and

10 percent were 65 and over.

The median age for white employed private household workers was 53 years, compared with 43 years for nonwhites.

In March 1969 less than 3 out of 10 private household workers were single:

27 percent were single;

37 percent were married and living with their husbands; and

36 percent were either widowed, divorced, or separated.

Educationally, the private household worker is disadvantaged:

Educational attainment March 1968	Women private household workers ^{3/}		
	Total	White	Nonwhite
		<u>Years</u>	
Median years of school completed	8.8	9.5	8.4
		<u>Percent</u>	
Less than 8 years ^{4/}	32.3	22.4	42.0
High school completed	19.3	25.3	13.5
Some college (1 to 4 years or more)	4.2	7.0	1.3

^{3/} 18 years of age and older.

^{4/} Includes persons reporting no school years completed.

Legislatively, the private household worker is disadvantaged:

Workers in this occupation receive credits toward an old-age, survivors, or disability pension only if they earn a minimum of \$50 from any one employer in a calendar quarter. While private household workers are eligible for coverage under the Social Security Act, they are not covered by the Federal minimum wage and hour law.

By and large, they are not afforded the protection of the major forms of labor legislation and social insurance from which most other workers benefit:

Wages: Wisconsin is the only State with a minimum wage order which, effective July 1, 1970, covers domestic service workers (women and minors) without numerical or hourly exclusions. Private household workers are covered by the statutory rate in four States: Arkansas, where the law applies only to those private household employees who work for an employer of five or more persons in a regular employment relationship; Michigan, where the minimum wage law applies only to those private household workers who work for an employer of four or more persons at any one time in a calendar year; Nebraska, where the law covers private household workers but not babysitters and applies only to employers of four or more workers (except seasonal workers); and West Virginia, where the law applies only to those who work for an employer of at least six persons during a calendar week.

Hours: Washington's maximum hours law establishes a 60-hour week for household workers; Montana's constitution establishes an 8-hour day for all employees, except those in agriculture.

Unemployment Compensation: New York and Hawaii have limited coverage of domestic workers under their State unemployment compensation laws. In New York, coverage has been extended to all persons in personal domestic service in a private household where the householder pays \$500 or more in a calendar quarter to all such employees. And in Hawaii, private household workers are covered only if they earn at least \$225 from an employer in a calendar quarter.

Workmen's Compensation: Coverage is compulsory for all regularly employed private household workers in Puerto Rico and for all but part-time workers in Alaska. Connecticut has compulsory coverage for all private household workers employed more than 26 hours a week by one employer; California, for those working more than 52 hours a week for one employer; Ohio, for those in households where the employer has three or more such employees; and New York, for those employed a minimum of 48 hours a week by one employer in cities of 40,000 or more. Massachusetts has compulsory coverage for private household workers other than those who are seasonal or casual, or who work less than 16 hours a week. For the latter

group, coverage is elective. In Michigan, while coverage is compulsory in households employing three or more workers, the employer is not liable for any such employee unless the person worked 35 hours or more a week for at least 13 weeks during the preceding 52 weeks. Coverage is elective in New Jersey, but the employer is not required to insure. In jurisdictions that do not specifically cover private household workers under workmen's compensation laws, such workers may be brought under voluntary coverage, except in Alabama, the District of Columbia, Iowa, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

NOTE: The statistical data in this report are from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Legislative data are as of January 1970, except as otherwise noted.

May 1970

Labor D.C. (WB 70-110)

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